

An improved, if not indeed perfect, standard of church architecture would be assured by founding immediately an "Incorporated Church Building Society" in each diocese of the Dominion, with a "parent-society" to which every prominent layman should be proud to belong, with the object in view as discussed. Each diocese would receive legacies, bequests and donations through its own branch, and according to the merits of each case would tender what is called in England "first aid"—however small in amount—by a contribution towards the work of any church builders who made application; attaching at the same time to its gift certain desirable conditions, such as the free allotment of a number of seats, examination and criticism of the plans and such like. It would also volunteer welcome advice to the oftentimes inexperienced promoters as to "preliminary steps in church building," "raising of funds"; miscellaneous hints affecting "selection of architect," "size of church," "seating," "signing the contract," "organs," etc.

The existence of such a society to refer to and depend upon should relieve the incumbent and promoters from the oftentimes very hard task of refusing to fall in, *necessarily*, with local "vested interests" in making various business arrangements. "Vested interests" sometimes strangle the best intentions at their very birth.

In England, the parent body of "The Incorporated Church Building Society" has for patrons, president, vice-presidents and committees the highest names, and all the bishops and leading laymen are included; attached to this central body is the "Consultative Committee of Honorary Consulting Architects"—men of established church building and antiquarian knowledge, who are charged with the responsibility of reporting upon all plans or projects (including furniture) remitted by the diocesan branches to headquarters. In New Zealand, this body might consist of two or three professional honorary architects, and if possible, co-opt a non-professional member known to be a Gothic enthusiast or traveller; and its meetings might take place in Wellington as being most central; but the appointments, in the writer's opinion, should not be permanent as in England, where the consulting architects number twelve, three possibly forming a quorum.

Up to 1913 the "Incorporated Church Building Society" of England and Wales had assisted to build, re-build, enlarge, or seat 9,624 churches and mission chapels, providing over 2,000,000 additional seats, of which three-fourths were made free; and it had made grants amounting to £950,456 towards churches, to which the public themselves contributed £18,579,298. It held in 1913 invested in trust for repairs of churches and chapels £131,104, and a general fund of £35,794.

The standing of the "Board of Honorary Consulting Architects" as regards all questions connected with the erection and furnishing of churches has become so generally recognised throughout

England, that most committees are satisfied to refer their plans and proposals to it as *their very first move* not merely to obtain the grant—usually small—but in order to get an unbiased opinion of their schemes: and after approval from this one quarter, other societies almost invariably accept the dictum and without further enquiry will follow suit with their own grant towards the project in hand.

CONCLUSION.

The writer of this article, upon being sent for to advise as to what form of church furnishing some intending donor's gift should take, has several times been urged "not to advise any stained glass windows: we can get them any day"—a gift conferring eternal prominence at comparatively small capital cost. Also, he had known a good, heavily-laden but cheerful priest to have the courage to refuse—with tact, of course—such a gift before his church fabric has been completed, with the result that he has done better in another way. Many, no doubt, have felt—"Oh! that it were one-hundredth part as easy to get this 'gift' *out* of my church as it was to get it *in*!" But the old folly of amiable "receptiveness" and acquiescence can be considered as mostly at an end now in England. That great architect, George Edmund Street, says of a fine ancient (Continental) church which had been spoiled by the introduction of tablets and "frippery" that "its interior now would gladden the heart of the English churchwarden." That condition is almost impossible now, for the clergy and wardens know how to guard their charge, fully realising that if it cannot be "exceeding magnificent," the fabric at least can be well built, genuine and true: more acceptable without the "frippery" and mere "trimmings."

And so can our churches and chapels be guarded by an "Incorporated Church Building Society of New Zealand" with a small "Board of Honorary Advisory Architects."

September 14th, 1921.

[The writer of the above cannot refrain from referring to the restful and beautiful new Church of S. Michael and All Angels, Kelburn, Wellington, the ably written encomium of which appearing in your November issue needs no emphasis from him. He would have walked far in the Old Country to see such veritable objects of art as the sedelia, the altar, and the beautiful font (the last a specimen of the natural and proper use of the marble and perfect in contour), which all students young and old should see; a good augury for the further gifts which we read are "on the way."]

30th November, 1921.

More than 27,000,000 square yards of concrete roads, streets and alleys have been placed under contract in the United States for the first six months of the present year.